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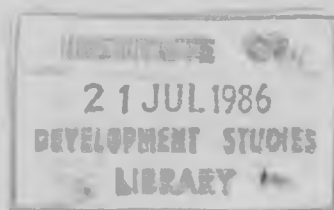
RESEARCH REPORT NO. 8

A STUDY OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES: THE CASE OF LESOTHO

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PREFACE

The District Level Planning and Rural Development (DLPRD) project of the Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS) began work in May, 1983 and is to run for three years in the first instance. The project is jointly funded by the Netherlands Universities' Fund for International Cooperation and the Government of Lesotho. The aims of the project are to undertake policy relevant research for decentralized rural development planning; to strengthen the research and teaching capacity of cooperating NUL departments; and to intensify the role of NUL as a research institute for government development planning agencies.

This report and the fieldwork upon which it is based are a response to the need to study and determine the role played by village development committees in their daily activities at the local level. As a case study of four districts the report aims to be reasonably representative of national conditions. Data have been collected from the lowlands, the foothills and the mountains.

The modest purpose of this report is to serve as an introduction to further studies of village development committees in Lesotho. It should also be viewed as an effort by students of local institutions to understand the organizational structure of these committees and how they relate to the mobilization of human resources for development. An attempt is also made to show the significance of village level institutions - both traditional and modern - and how the two types of institution interplay at the local level.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

AD	Agricultural demonstrator
Bakoena	A Basotho clan
Basotho	Citizens of Lesotho
BCP	Basotho Congress Party
BDA	Basotho Democratic Alliance
BNP	Basotho National Party
Bohali	Bridewealth payment
CLO	Constituency Liaison Officer
DC	District Coordinator
DDC	District Development Committee
DLPDP	District Level Planning and Rural Development Project
Ipapeng Committee	Unity Committee
ISAS	Institute of Southern African Studies
Khotla	Village court
Komiti ea Boithatelo Bo Botle	Self Help Committee
LAC	Land Allocation Committee
Leboella or Letobo	Controlled grazing area
LEC	Lesotho Evangelical Church
Lekhotla la Bafo	Commoners' League
Lesang Mafufa	Name of a self help committee
Letsema	Work party
LLA	'Lesotho Liberation Army'

'Ma-Weekend

Those who visit home, especially from South Africa, on weekends

MFP

Marematlou Freedom Party

Morena

Chief

Morena ke morena ka sechaba

A chief is a chief because of the people

Morena oa sebaka

Ward chief

Morena oa sehlooho

Principal chief

Mophato

Traditional school

Moate Sheleng

Burial society

Mosotho

A citizen of Lesotho

NUL

National University of Lesotho

Pitso

Public meeting

Qomatsi

State of emergency

Ramotse

Headman

RSA

Republic of South Africa

SPSS

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UDP

United Democratic Party

VDC

Village Development Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Popular participation and informal groups have always existed in village communities to help, advise and guide chiefs in the general administration of their societies. Formal groups existed for the first time in 1959. These were committees responsible for village water supply, elected by the village with the guidance of the District Council (1).

According to van de Geer and Wallis, it was not until the mid-sixties that the village development committees became 'an alternative source of authority to traditional structure' (2). The Basotho National Party and the Basotho Congress Party set up committees in 1965 to amass political support at the grass roots level in order to lead the country to independence. After independence in 1966, allegiance to the political parties weakened. The committees which had been set up to mobilize the masses for elections became weak and began to lose the support of some of their members. Some chiefs were active in trying to destabilize the committees. The abortive 1970 elections saw the revival of these village committees, but afterwards they disappeared or were transformed. The BCP committees became inactive, while BNP committees were changed mainly into project committees and vehicles for party political messages.

1.2. Village development committees today: a summary

Modern village development committees have grown from the foundations described above, with the support of Government during the 1970s and 1980s. Typically the VDC now consists of a chairperson and deputy, secretary and deputy, treasurer and additional members. Members may either be elected by the community at pitsos, nominated by existing VDC members or nominated by Government through the Constituency Liaison Officer. The chief may or may not be a member.

The functions of the VDCs range from rural development to social work. The terms of reference from these committees as they presently perceive them include range management, village water supply, road construction, soil conservation, tree planting, grazing control and social affairs. Meetings tend to be held monthly, or more frequently if the occasion arises.

VDC members are expected to have some knowledge of traditional law, be hard working, honest and impartial. On average they hold office for two years, after which elections are expected to be held. Members can be re-elected. Female VDC members tend to be better educated than their male counterparts. 65.6% of the VDC members interviewed were Roman Catholics, and 95.7% said they were members of the Basotho National Party.

VDCs are faced with many problems. Their communities often

lack a good drinking water supply, suffer shortages of food, lack roads and face serious soil erosion, to name a few. The intention is that through VDCs, the popular participation in local development should be encouraged. Traditional popular institutions like pitso meetings and letsema work parties can also make a contribution in this regard. The merger of these traditional and modern participatory institutions must be seen as a major aim in rural development. There is great potential for this. An additional local level body is the land allocation committee, which is chaired by the chief and tends to be supported by him. Party politics are also significant at village level, and have weakened some development projects. Other self help projects have been weakened by food aid, which has made people unwilling to work without payment any more.

A variety of extension cadres exist to support VDCs, although the amount of help they are able to give varies. Agricultural demonstrators, rural development extension workers, health extension workers and livestock and range agents may all have significant links with certain VDCs.

Local perceptions of VDCs vary. Some view them as Government representatives, while others see them as committees that can bring projects to the community. Others claim that VDC members are selected because of their affiliation to the BNP, while in some communities the selection of VDC members is not taken seriously at all and key positions end up in the hands of unqualified people.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study of village development committees can briefly be stated as, first, to investigate the structure and functioning of these bodies and the role they play in day to day administration at the local level; secondly, to look into how village development committees enhanced popular participation in development; and thirdly, to look at the different roles played by modern and traditional institutions.

1.4. Methodology and fieldwork problems

A first draft of a questionnaire for this study of VDCs was prepared by the DLPRD project manager and then revised in discussions between him and the author. When a final version of the questionnaire had been prepared it was pretested in Sefikeng, a village not later included in the main study.

The questionnaire was written in English rather than in Sesotho; translation was done at the actual time of interview. The interviewer translated the questions mentally before putting each one to the respondent. This caused problems of interpretation for both interviewers and respondents.

It should be noted that the questionnaire included questions that were to be put only to VDC members, and others that were to be put to both VDC members and other villagers who did not belong to the committee. For example, only VDC members were asked detailed questions about the procedure of the committee, whereas both they and a selection of non members in the village were asked for their opinions about how the VDC was working or how it should be working. The aim of this was to get outsiders' views on the functioning of the VDC as well as those of the members themselves. A note is included in the tables below to show whether the data refer to all respondents or just the VDC members.

Lack of time and resources prevented any attempt to undertake a statistically representative sample of all VDCs in Lesotho. Instead, four of the ten districts in the country were chosen for attention, and villages were selected within these districts, in an attempt to gain a broadly representative picture of the differing conditions around the country. The districts chosen were Mafeteng, Maseru, Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek.

Fieldwork for this study was launched in the winter of 1983, but then had to be delayed for several months because of a lack of transport. It was only after the DLPRD project obtained its own transport in January 1984 and ceased having to rely upon other vehicles that substantial progress was realized.

The investigators obtained letters of introduction addressed to principal chiefs, chiefs, headmen and district coordinators from the Permanent Secretary (District Coordination) in the Cabinet Office. As a result they were well received by most chiefs, although on two or three occasions the VDLs sent them first to the Constituency Liaison Officers to obtain their endorsement. Once this had been done there were no further problems.

Data from the questionnaires were coded by the author and then processed and analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences at the Government of Lesotho Computer Centre.

In the tables below, percentages are calculated on the total number of valid observations, excluding any cases for which the relevant information was unknown or not recorded. Some questions allowed multiple responses, which is why the number of responses is sometimes greater than the number of respondents.

2. STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

2.1. Structure

The structure of village development committees varies from village to village, district by district. This is partly due to the absence so far of a uniform set of regulations and guidelines. Other factors are the size of a village and the differing political relations in villages and the varying degree to which chieftainship is active at the village level' (3).

VDCs typically have a chairperson and deputy, a secretary and deputy, a treasurer and ordinary members. The membership may be appointed by the chief, by the public at a pitso meeting, by existing members of the VDC or by the Constituency Liaison Officer. Table 2.1 below shows the offices held by the actual VDC members interviewed in the course of this survey.

Table 2.1. Offices held by VDC members interviewed

	No. of respondents	%
Ordinary member	35	26.1
Secretary	32	23.9
Chairperson	26	19.4
Deputy chair	17	12.7
Deputy secretary	12	9.0
Treasurer	12	9.0
Total	134	100.0

2.2. Selection and removal of members

37.7% of all those interviewed (VDC members and non members) said that members of the VDC should be selected at a pitso meeting, while 34.6% said that they should be selected by outdoing VDC members and BNP members only. Table 2.2 below shows that the commonest official way people think VDC members should be selected is at a pitso meeting. However, the common practice is for existing VDC members and members of the BNP to choose VDC members. This is not legal, but has tended not to be challenged. Some villagers, especially members of opposition parties, view VDC elections as internal affairs of the BNP and consider themselves to have nothing to do with such matters. Others feel that because of their development role they are just as entitled as BNP members to take part in VDC elections, and that their legitimate interests should be taken into account.

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Table 2.2. Officially, how should VDC members be selected?

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Pitso	72	37.7
VDC and BNC members	66	34.6
Constituency Liaison Officer	15	7.9
People and ward chief	7	3.7
Government and people	5	2.6
VDC and chief	1	0.5
Don't know	25	13.1

62.3% of all those interviewed said that VDC should be selected annually (see Table 2.3 below), while 5.8% said that they should be selected after every two years. On the other hand, the majority of respondents felt that there was nothing official to say how about often elections should be held. 21.5% of the respondents had no answer to this question. Some of these may have had no interest in VDCs and their election, while others may have been afraid that their answers could be turned against them at some later stage.

Table 2.3. Officially, how often should VDC members be selected?

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Every year	119	62.3
Every two years	11	5.8
Every three years	7	3.7
Every four years	4	2.1
Just once	1	0.5
Irregularly	6	3.1
Don't know	41	21.5

Table 2.4 below shows the actual position in the villages surveyed and reveals the inconsistencies in the actual length of time that had elapsed since VDC election/selection last took place in each community. In fact, if VDCs really are renewed every year it must be very difficult for them to maintain continuity, considering the number of different social and economic events that take place in the course of the year in which VDC members must take part in addition to their VDC duties. On the other hand, keeping the same VDC for four years may starve the committee of fresh ideas.

Table 2.4. When VDC was last selected

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Less than one year ago	30	15.7
1 - 2 years ago	64	33.5
2 - 3 years ago	15	7.9
3 - 4 years ago	9	4.7
Over 4 years ago	29	15.2
Don't know	41	21.5

Turning to the criteria according to which VDC members should be selected, predictable qualities of honesty and reliability were mentioned by many respondents (Table 2.5 below). A knowledge of law was mentioned by many people and indicates now a better legal status was commonly thought to be important for enhancing the contribution of VDCs to local development, although no clear ideas seemed to exist about how this should be done.

Table 2.5. Officially, on what criteria should VDC members be selected?

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Ability, knowledge of law	59	30.9
Hard working	45	23.6
Honesty, impartiality	41	18.7
BNP membership	39	17.6
Good behaviour, good sense	17	7.8
Age and experience	9	4.1
Education	7	3.2

VDC members and other villagers were asked on what grounds a VDC member can officially be removed from office. As Table 2.6 shows, 28.9% said that they can be removed from office if they are inefficient and old, while 20.6% said they can be removed if they break the confidentiality of VDC meetings. Further enquiry, however, revealed that the commonest actual reason for the removal of VDC members was for non attendance of meetings or complete desertion of the committee.

Table 2.6. On what grounds can VDC members officially be removed from office?

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Inefficiency, old age	56	28.9
Breach of confidentiality	40	20.6
Absence from meetings, poor cooperation	36	18.6
Bad behaviour	23	11.9
Corruption, dishonesty	20	10.3
Party affiliation	12	5.2
Dont't know	9	4.6

2.3. Characteristics of VDC members

Table 2.7 below shows the sex of the VDC members, non VDC members and chiefs interviewed in the course of the survey. It can be seen that over three quarters of the VDC members interviewed are women. This is an indication of the proportion of men who are absent from their villages at work elsewhere and the extent to which local development activities and committees must become the responsibility of women. The same factor is responsible for the interesting age profiles of the two sexes of VDC member. 11.9% of the female members said that their ages were between 31 and 40, while only 3.3% of the males fell into this age group. Again this is because of the large proportion of young to middle aged men who must migrate to the urban areas of Lesotho, and especially to South Africa.

Table 2.7. Type of respondent by sex

Type of respondent	Male	Female	Total
VDC member	31	103	134
%	23.1	76.9	70.2
Non VDC member	16	37	53
%	30.2	69.8	27.7
Chief	2	2	4
%	50.0	50.0	2.1

20.7% of the female VDC members had attended school up to the old standard four (the equivalent of the new standard six),

in contrast to only 5.9% of the male members. Table 2.8 below shows the educational attainments of the male and female VDC members respectively.

Table 2.8. Sex and education of VDC members

Education	Females		Males	
	No.	%	No.	%
Old Std. 1 = new Std. 3	7	8.5	1	5.9
Old Std. 2 = new Std. 4	8	9.8	3	17.6
Old Std. 3 = new Std. 5	17	20.7	3	17.6
Old Std. 4 = new Std. 6	17	20.7	1	5.9
Old Std. 5 = new Std. 7	16	19.5	1	5.9
Old Std. 6 = new Form A	10	12.2	2	11.8
Old Std. 7 = new Form B	3	3.7	1	5.9
Old Form B = new Form D	1	1.2		
No education, literate	1	1.2		
No education, illiterate	2	2.4	5	29.4

VDC members were asked about the principal source of subsistence of their households in an effort to learn something about their economic status within the community. As Table 2.9 shows, 56.5% come from predominantly farming households. The second largest group has a primary dependence on wages earned in the Republic of South Africa. This latter group is likely to dwindle and the former group to grow if recent trends of decreasing employment opportunities in South Africa continue.

Table 2.9. Principal source of subsistence of VDC members' households

	No. of respondents	%
Agriculture	78	56.5
Wages RSA	26	18.8
Agriculture + local off farm employment	11	8.0
Agriculture + wages Lesotho	9	6.5
Wages RSA + Lesotho	7	5.1
Wages Lesotho	7	5.1

Despite this heavy dependence on agriculture, 57.2% of the VDC members interviewed have less than three fields (Table 2.10 below). 61.1% said that they owned more than four cattle, however.

Table 2.10. Number of fields held by VDC members

No. of fields	No. of respondents	%
0	10	7.2
1	36	26.1
2	33	23.9
3	54	39.1
4	4	2.9
5	1	0.7

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE, FUNCTIONING AND PROBLEMS OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

3.1. Terms of reference

The terms of reference of VDCs can broadly be described as rural development at the local level. They include agricultural improvement, range management, village water supplies, soil conservation and social welfare, to name a few. Both VDC member and non member respondents were asked whether the VDC had

Table 3.1. Terms of reference of VDCs
(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Range management	44	15.9
Development	42	15.2
Water supply	33	11.9
Roads	32	11.6
Soil conservation	17	6.2
Tree planting	17	6.2
Advise chief	15	5.4
Social affairs	14	5.1
Toilets	9	3.3
Link government and people	7	2.5
Promote self reliance	6	2.2
Solve problems	5	1.6
Communal gardens	4	1.4
Land allocation	4	1.4
BNP political representatives	3	1.1
Bridges	3	1.1
Encourage payment of taxes	2	0.7
Impound stray animals	2	0.7
Grazing control	1	0.4
Clinics	1	0.4
As instructed	1	0.4
Build canals	1	0.4
Don't know	13	4.7

official terms of reference. 15.2% of the respondents simply referred to 'development', without specifying what this entailed. 15.9% mentioned range management. Multiple responses were allowed to this question, which is why the total number of responses in Table 3.1. above exceeds the number of respondents.

When asked whether the VDC fulfilled its functions, the majority of the respondents answered in the affirmative. The research team observed that most people seemed to want to present a positive picture of the VDC to people who they thought might be Government officials. Those who were negative about the VDC's effectiveness pointed out that not all VDC projects were a success. They placed some of the blame for this on the poor response by local people, and some on poor relations between the VDC and central Government.

All respondents were also asked about the future plans of their VDCs. Drinking water was the project most commonly mentioned (by 24.1%), while 14.7% mentioned roads.

Table 3.2. Future VDC activities

	No. of respondents	%
Water supply	46	24.1
Roads	28	14.7
Soil conservation	23	12.0
Tree planting	22	11.5
Communal gardens	15	7.5
Latrines	13	6.8
Dams	7	3.7
Self sufficiency	7	3.7
Jobs	7	3.7
Bridges	6	3.1
Handicrafts	5	2.6
Tractors	4	2.1
Schools	4	2.1
Police station	3	1.6
Piggery	2	1.0
Electricity	2	1.0
Poultry	2	1.0
Drought aid	2	1.0
Cooperatives	2	1.0
Range management	2	1.0
Clinic	2	1.0
Wool shed	2	1.0
Increase incentives	1	0.5
Projects	1	0.5
Clean surroundings	1	0.5

3.2. The functioning of VDCs

Both VDC members and other villagers were asked how often the VDC met. 51.3% said that meetings are held monthly, while 22.0% did not know. These were almost all non members of the VDC who evidently were not well informed about the activities of their committee.

Table 3.3. Frequency of VDC meetings

	No. of respondents	%
Monthly	98	51.3
Weekly	28	14.7
As necessary	10	5.2
Fortnightly	3	1.6
Unknown	42	22.0

A major activity of the VDC should be the raising, storage and use of funds for local development purposes. VDCs officially have a treasurer, but sometimes the post is not filled and these responsibilities end up falling under the chairperson. Sometimes there is a treasurer, but there are no funds - either because the treasurer is incompetent, or funds which the committee raised earlier have been exhausted and no new money has been raised. The latter problem seemed to be common. It stems from the poor management from which many VDCs suffer.

Table 3.4 below shows the way in which VDC members and non members said the VDC raises funds. A common arrangement is for VDCs to try and raise a proportion of the money needed for a project locally, and then to try and secure the balance from Government. Some people criticize this Government assistance as increasing dependency, while others view it as an important impetus to self help. As has just been indicated, the efficiency with which VDCs raise or hold on to funds, or even keep track of them at all, is variable. 80.5% of the VDC members said that their committee keeps financial records, while the others said there were no such accounts. Table 3.4 below shows who was actually reported to keep these accounts.

Table 3.4. How VDCs raise funds

(All respondents)

	No. of respondents	%
Collections	80	58.4
Stokfel and beer sales	26	18.9
Concerts and loans	15	10.9
Grazing control fines	8	5.8
Sale of trees for building material	3	2.2
Tax	1	0.7

Table 3.5. Who keeps VDC accounts

(VDC members)

	No. of respondents	%
Treasurer	99	90.0
Secretary	8	4.2
Other members	3	1.6
Unknown	1	0.5

3.3. Problems facing VDCs

When VDC members and other villagers were asked to say what they thought their VDC's biggest problem currently was, 25.0% mentioned bad administration, while 12.8% said it was the problem of getting clean drinking water for their communities (Table 3.6 below).

Another common problem which VDCs were observed to face is that of food distribution, which has become a common VDC responsibility in the recent drought years. This process has proved in practice often to be confusing and discriminating. The amount of food which people ought to receive is not clearly defined, and this has generated ill feeling on many occasions, especially among supporters of the BNP who believe that they ought to receive first preference over members of other parties. Some respondents see the issue of food distribution being used to seek support and persuade members of other parties to join the BNP and vote for the incumbent Government in the coming general elections. More practical problems which have led to poor food distribution are actual shortages and lack of proper coordination. At district, constituency and village level, food relief distribution is administered by the District Drought Relief Committee under the chairmanship of the District Coordinator. Constituency Liaison Officers chair meetings of

Drought Relief Committees at the constituency level, while Village Drought Relief Committees controlled by the VDLs take responsibility at village level. Constituency Liaison Officers compile lists of critically affected persons and pass them on to the District Coordinator. The research team observed that VDCs and district officials no longer trust each other in this field and have become cynical about the whole project. Some VDCs blame their district officials for the late arrival of food, while others blame central Government. Another problem is that some

Table 3.6. The biggest problem currently facing the VDC

	No. of respondents	%
Bad administration	40	25.6
Food	22	14.1
Water supply	20	12.6
Bad relations with chief	10	6.4
Party politics	6	3.8
Lack of roads	6	3.8
Soil erosion	5	3.2
Range management	5	3.2
Salaries for VDC members	4	2.6
Lack of funds	3	1.9
Clinic	3	1.9
School	3	1.9
Not taken seriously	2	1.3
Need tractors	2	1.3
Problem with CLO	1	0.6
Communal garden	1	0.6
Old VDC members	1	0.6
Thaba Bosiu Project	1	0.6
No problem	20	12.6

VDC members feel strongly that drought relief should only go to BNP members. Others strongly oppose this suggestion.

4. VDC RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY

4.1. The churches

Of the three main churches in Lesotho, namely the Roman Catholic Church, the Lesotho Evangelical Church and the Anglican Church, a majority (65.7%) of the VDC members interviewed are Catholics while 21.2% belong to the LEC (Table 4.1 below). While

additional statistics and crosstabulations would be needed to prove the relationship, it is tempting to link the high proportion of Roman Catholics with the almost uniform membership of VDC members in the Basotho National Party (see section 4.2 below).

Table 4.1. Religious denomination of VDC members

	No. of respondents	%
Roman Catholic	90	65.7
Lesotho Evangelical Church	29	21.2
Anglican	10	7.3
Independent	6	4.4
Methodist	2	1.5

4.2. Party politics

When VDC members were asked what political party they support, 95.7% said they support the Basotho National Party and only 1.4% claimed to support the Basotho Congress Party.

Table 4.2. Political party supported by VDC members

	No. of respondents	%
BNP	132	95.7
BCP	2	1.4
None	4	2.9

92.7% said that they have always supported the BNP, while 4.4% said that they used to support the BCP but have now fully joined the BNP. An additional 2.9% said that they once belonged to the Marematlou Freedom Party but have now joined the BNP.

A further question in the survey enquired whether the VDC was divided along party political lines. This question, which was put to both VDC members and other villagers, produced the response that 49.5% felt there was such a party political division while 47.5% felt there was not. When asked to what extent party politics are significant in the affairs of the village generally, 44.5% said they were not at all significant, while 39.8% said that they were important. Intermediate opinions or uncertainty were expressed by the remainder. Overall it would appear that while some people want to keep politics out of local level development, there are others who definitely want to make it a political process. Meanwhile, more than 50% of the non VDC

members interviewed and less than 20% of the VDC members feel that politics and development must remain separate.

The Constituency Liaison Officer has come to play an important role with regard to VDCs. The CLO is the executive arm of the BNP at village level. He is appointed by the party to look after its own interests in a given constituency, and as such he monitors VDCs and their activities closely. Some of the functions of the CLO are to bring people together through the chiefs and VDCs for the identification, discussion and implementation of projects. He/she reports directly to the party on matters that concern his/her constituency. CLOs receive and distribute drought relief food. They are the electoral officers of the VDCs and mediate between the chiefs and VDCs in all matters including misunderstandings that may arise from the conflicting roles of these institutions.

Although they do not hold any position on the VDC, CLOs are sometimes invited to attend VDC meetings. The VDC may invite the CLO, through its chairperson, to settle internal disputes. They also help to identify projects, to provide additional training and advice on rural projects, and to raise funds. CLOs keep a close watch on village political activities and recruit for the party.

When asked about the relationship of the VDC with the CLO, more than 60% of the VDC members said that it was of a political nature. It was clear to the research team that many CLOs are inefficient due to lack of proper training. It is not advisable to have chiefs as CLOs because of the wide ranging responsibilities of the two separate offices. In one village people criticized their chief for failing to carry out both sets of tasks adequately. They said that their village was among the first to apply for food aid but that they had not received it. They blamed their chief, who is also CLO, for this. Further training should be provided for CLOs in order to strengthen their abilities in the field of rural development.

4.3. District Development Committees

In theory, VDCs should have links with District Development Committees, which are meant to coordinate rural development activities at the district level. DDCs were established in the mid sixties. Their role was 'to bring together all development agencies with representatives of the chiefs and people to discuss and advise on matters of rural development'. VDC members were asked what they thought the functions of the DDC were. The responses indicate that there is minimal support for village level institutions from the district level. Although in theory there should be a link which could be utilized for the exchange

Table 4.3. What are the functions of the District Development Committee?

(VDC members)

	No. of respondents	%
Support VDCs	10	7.2
Coordinate development	7	5.1
Receive proposals from VDCs	2	1.4
Advise	1	1.0
Form link	1	1.0
Don't know	116	84.1

of information, in fact 84.1% of the VDC members knew nothing about the DDC. The 7.2% who said that the function of the DDC was to support the VDCs said that this did not happen in practice. Asked to state whether the DDC was helpful to the VDC, 28.2% of the VDC members who knew about DDCs said that they were helpful, while 71.8% said that they were not.

4.3. Central Government

Beyond the DDC, villagers naturally look to central Government for support in their local development aspirations. VDC members and other villagers were asked what type of help the VDC needed from Government in order to improve its status and performance. A wide range of responses were given, the two commonest being 'supervision' and help with the village water supply (Table 4.4 below). Many respondents had ideas on the desirability of central Government action to speed up the process of decentralization, but few had concrete ideas on how exactly this should be done.

Table 4.4. --What can Government do to improve the status and performance of VDCs?

	No. of respondents	%
Supervision	22	11.5
Water supply	22	11.5
Food aid	21	10.9
Education	17	8.9
Jobs	11	5.6
Roads	11	5.6
Tractors	9	4.7
Tools	7	3.7
Provide extension officers	5	2.6
Clinics	5	2.6
Police stations	5	2.6
'Positive response'	4	2.1
Latrines	3	1.6
Provide office for VDC	3	1.6
Piggery	2	1.0
Tree planting	2	1.0
Agriculture	2	1.0
Meet VDC's requests	1	0.5
Wool shed	1	0.5
Cut out politics	1	0.5
Poultry	1	0.5
Range management	1	0.5
Transport	1	0.5
Build cafes	1	0.5

4.5. Extension services

A variety of extension services operate in rural Lesotho, and the VDC should be one of their principal contact points at the village level. The commonest extension worker with whom VDC members said they were in contact was the agricultural extension agent, who was mentioned by 43.3% of the VDC members interviewed. Exactly the same proportion said that they were in touch with no extension officers at all. Few of the contacts which exist at all have very practical results, and there was a general feeling among respondents that extension workers should visit more often and do more to introduce concrete projects to their communities (Table 4.6 below). Respondents also felt that agricultural training was essential for the younger generation since they are the farmers of tomorrow. Self sufficiency in agriculture is an important goal, especially for the future when migrant labour opportunities in South Africa have been reduced. There is a need for agricultural demonstrators to be better supervised. While some are sober, hard working and devoted to their work, others are dissolute, irresponsible and lazy. In the Botswana experience, Brown (4) found that 'given (their) overwhelming set of responsibilities, it is not surprising that many ADs pick and

Table 4.5. Extension workers with which the VDC has contact

(VDC members)

	No. of respondents	%
Agricultural demonstrator	55	43.3
Rural development	18	14.2
Health	15	11.8
Nutrition	1	1.6
Boithnatelo bo bottle	1	0.8
Range management	1	0.8
None	55	43.3

Table 4.6 How could extension workers support the VDC better?

(VDC members)

	No. of respondents	%
Bring projects	26	22.6
More frequent visits	25	21.7
Demonstrations	22	19.1
General advice	22	19.1
No extra support needed	10	8.7
Cooperatives	1	0.9
Unknown	9	7.8

choose, performing only those duties that they find convenient or absolutely necessary'. These duties include meetings and courses. Most ADs spent more of their time doing paperwork in the office than out in the field.

11.8% of the VDC members interviewed said that they have contacts with health extension workers. It was stated that the objectives of these workers are to help improve the standard of health in the community; to stress the need for sick people to attend health posts, clinics and hospitals; to encourage people to build and use latrines; to demonstrate the use of rubbish containers and to clean up compounds in villages. Mothers are taught how to cultivate small plots or communal gardens to help undernourished children. Most villages have communal gardens, although due to the current drought many of these gardens have disappeared. Family planning has its own religious, social and economic problems as well. Health extension workers face problems of illiteracy and the poverty of the communities they serve. Villagers face problems where health extension workers do not live in their own communities. Health facilities are thinly

spread and understaffed, and communications are poor. Similar problems face nutrition extension workers, who had only been seen by one of the VDC members interviewed.

The research team observed that modern institutions, because of their western elements, are not always well received at village level, especially if they are not made to fit into already existing traditional institutions. It is always important for Government agencies to train extension workers to adapt to local conditions rather than for Government to impose an already prepared agenda for social action on local institutions. Since Government is the benefactor of most rural development activities and local people are the beneficiaries, the tendency is for Government always to determine local priorities rather than for the extension workers to do so in collaboration with local people through their local institutions. Sometimes such moves superimpose themselves on the already existing programme of action drawn up by local committees and their communities. The Senou Project is but one example of such projects that failed because they lack local support. When social action for development is superimposed from the outside it denies people the opportunity to develop local capacity for social action, and the final result is apathy. A ready made set of priorities from Government is often seen by the people as the Government's duty towards them, rather than as the springboard from which locally initiated projects are to take off. An adequate sense of commitment is often lacking, and this can kill well intended projects.

As with the DDC, VDC contacts with district level officials in general are sparse. 43.1% of the VDC members interviewed said that they have no contact with district level officials, while 35.8% said that they do. The latter group only gave vague descriptions of the function of these contacts, however, saying that they met to discuss problems in general.

Table 4.7. Contacts between the VDC and district level officials

	No. of respondents	%
No contact	47	43.1
Discuss problems	39	35.8
Receive advice	16	14.7
Rarely come	2	1.8
Politics	2	1.8
Link VDC and chief	1	0.9
Hold pitso	1	0.9
Give courses	1	0.9

4.6. Business people

Business people who were immediately identifiable in the villages during the survey were cafe and restaurant owners, 'commercial farmers, brick manufacturers and brick layers, and beer brewers. When asked to describe contacts between VDCs and business people, many of the VDC members replied that there are no such contacts. They criticized these entrepreneurs as being of no assistance to village level projects, either financially or in terms of expertise. Some they described as selfish. This attitude is often promoted when business people refuse to assist with transport needed to carry out a village project, or when they are supposed to help in situations like funerals. In more than 60% of the villages visited by the research team, villagers complained of the high prices local business people charged them and of tax rates higher than the normal government sales tax. We were further informed that because in many cases such business people have a complete monopoly on a local market which is totally dependent on them, any attempt to boycott them is bound to fail. The only two businessmen who belong to a VDC were said to be very inefficient in this capacity. They spend a lot of time away from home taking care of their businesses. Sometimes very important meetings fail to take place when they are away, because both of them hold executive positions (chairman and secretary). Local business people should be encouraged to join local institutions. They have contacts regionally and nationally of which such institutions could take advantage. On the other hand, this could deny poor villagers leadership opportunities in their local organizations. The tendency may be for business people to be appointed to positions of leadership at the expense of the poorer but more dedicated group. The ultimate result might be for poor people to opt out of such organizations by associating them with the rich.

4.7. Teachers

A large number of VDC members said that they do not have contact with local teachers, except perhaps through their own children or through their membership of a Parent Teachers Association. In one instance, the research team was told that due to the shortage of teachers - let alone qualified teachers - in most villages, teachers fail to participate fully in locally based development activities, including those of VDCs. The only time a teacher gets the opportunity to participate in local projects is when such projects have a direct bearing on schools. VDCs and teachers receive contributions from members of the community, organize a concert or a bazaar or sell beer to raise funds for building the school or additional classrooms, latrines, piped water systems or to purchase items like blackboards and chalk.

Teachers, like business people, overshadow VDC members - in this case because of their superior education. This may make VDC members feel inferior. On the other hand, the teacher is exposed to more short and long term contacts through pupils and

graduates. Sometimes these graduates end up working in the civil service, and may prove useful in times of need. But teachers may also deny the less educated and yet committed group the leading positions in local committees because of their inferior education.

Teachers, especially the male ones, were criticized for bad behaviour. They were said to drink heavily in public, to be promiscuous, and to have lost respect in the eyes of villagers. In such cases teachers are excluded from VDCs in order to preserve the good image of the latter.

4.8. Traditional doctors

Although the influence of traditional doctors has been undermined by western educated doctors, their power and influence should not be ignored. They still play an important role in the daily lives of the people and help the sick, sometimes at a low price. Rain makers are still taken seriously. The power and influence of the traditional doctor stems from his/her title and status and from the traditional code of ethics which is often embodied in the sanctions by which the community have to abide. This charismatic domination holds the potential to be translated into action for social development, especially if such people as traditional doctors who have these qualities and powers are able to use them to influence people into taking part in local development. It is in this respect that VDCs and traditional doctors could work together on local projects. Problems could arise, however: if such people are involved in community decision making others may be afraid to oppose them for fear of bewitchment.

5. TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS, MODERN INSTITUTIONS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The most easily identifiable institutions at the village level are the chiefly or traditional ones. Apart from the chief him/herself, the best known such institutions are the pitso and the khotla. VDCs are often referred to as the active arm of the chief. On the other hand, VDCs are a major part of the process whereby chiefly institutions are now being supplanted by modern institutions. The Basotho nation under the astute leadership of Moshoeshoe I was forced to accept the alliances of many chiefs. Today under Moshoeshoe II, chieftainship exists under the numerous constraints of modern alternative structures that undermine its power and influence. During the pre independence campaigns chieftainship became a bone of contention between the two major political parties in Lesotho. The BCP despised it and promised that it would do away with it once elected into power. The BNP and MFP were in support of chieftainship and promised the chiefs and their supporters that they would retain it once elected. This was a major influence in the victory of the BNP

and the defeat of the BCP in the pre independence elections. Chiefs are still often the best channel for the popularization of new ideas in a village; but since modern institutions have come to be introduced at the local level, the power and influence of many chiefs has diminished.

5.1. Traditional resource management institutions

Before colonialism, communal resources were controlled by traditional institutions. The chief was the 'manager' of the common patrimony, subject, however, to community decisions taken at the khotla. Stray cattle or the construction of communal dams, for instance, were always the task of the regiments of the chief. Today most of the official powers of resource management appear to have fallen to the VDC. But some measure of control remains with the traditional institutions, and modern institutions like the VDC may use traditional authority to legitimize their actions. For example, before the VDC impounds animals that violate grazing regulations the chief is always informed. Such animals are in fact brought to the khotla and not to the chairperson of the VDC. Communal resource management decisions are still taken in consultation with the public at a pitso meeting rather than simply in the VDC. The chief's role continues to be important: a majority of the VDC members interviewed agreed that before the committee undertakes any project the normal procedure is first to inform the chief, who will in turn make an announcement at a pitso. The site for a community project like a garden, clinic school or woodshed must also be selected in consultation with the people at a pitso. Disputes over controlled grazing and other resource management issues are still adjudicated by the chief and his her court. Interested and powerful chiefs take the lead in village development activities like water supplies and the construction of roads and dams. The approval of a pitso meeting and the blessing of the chief thus continue to be needed if a project is to succeed.

5.2. VDCs and resource management

In many communities the VDC has now taken some or all the responsibility for resource management, notably grazing control. The survey noted that both VDC members and non VDC respondents are aware of the deterioration of the range and of the fact that the human population is increasing relative to the available arable land. But this awareness has seldom promoted any meaningful action, possibly because some people think that rainfall is the main determinant of range quality. To such people a technical concept like carrying capacity may be hard to grasp. The absence of men from home has left many responsibilities, including those of the VDC, in the hands of women. It is these women who, through the VDC, commonly have charge of grazing control in consultation with the chief. The social position of women, however, does not encourage men to

respect their decisions or those of the VDC in this field. Men may not take kindly to being sent by women to impound stray animals or those that are grazing in violation of grazing regulations. The support of the chief is essential, but in some cases this may not be forthcoming if the chief wants to belittle the VDC and indicate his/her own continuing authority. This tension may now be exacerbated in that whereas the revenue collected in fines on impounded animals traditionally belonged to the chiefs, VDCs now put the money into their coffers and the chiefs do not receive anything.

Village water supply is commonly managed by separate water committees which are subcommittees of the VDC. The problems of managing a clean drinking water supply are as many as there are successes. Some irresponsible villagers destroy or pollute wells or water animals at them, and some water supplies have run dry. Local people also need to be trained in the maintenance of modern water systems.

5.3. VDCs and land allocation

Land is considered a common patrimony by the Basotho. Traditionally, principal chiefs, chiefs and headmen were the sole allocators of land. Today they are assisted by Land Allocation Committees, which are chaired by gazetted chiefs. However, as has been noted above, it is the VDCs rather than the LACs which tend to have taken over responsibility for range management and other natural resource issues which might have been thought more logically to rest with the LAC. In the survey, respondents were asked about the relationship between the two committees in their community. Their answers are shown in Table 5.1 below. It can be seen that most people consider the committees to function independently, although 14.1% considered them to be one and the same body. In many villages the LAC consults the VDC when it

Table 5.1. Relationship between the VDC and the LAC

(All respondents)

	Nc. of respondents	%
Independent	106	55.5
No difference	27	14.1
VDC for development, LAC for land allocation	10	5.2
Cooperation	9	4.7
Share membership	3	1.6
Subordinate	1	0.5
Not clear	1	0.5
Unknown	25	13.1
Not stated	9	4.7

allocates land, and when there are disputes over land the VDC is invited to mediate. Whereas the chief is not normally part of the VDC, he/she is by law the chairperson of the LAC. This is an example of the merger between traditional and modern institutions. The LAC thus does not have the semi-autonomous status of the VDC. The general observation of the research team was that chiefs tend to like LACs better than VDCs and to cooperate with them more closely in a better working relationship. VDCs seem to think that they are above the chiefs and answerable directly to central Government and the ruling party rather than to the chiefs. Conversely, LACs are used by chiefs to demonstrate their power and influence in the community. In cases where relations between the chief and the VDC are poor, the chief may use the LAC to suppress the VDC; the latter may then find many obstacles in the path of project implementation while the former makes much smoother progress.

LACs themselves face problems, however. The process of land allocation is now complicated by bureaucratic red tape. The decision making machinery has been rendered more complex by the number of people who have to be involved in each decision of the committee. Decisions are thus often delayed because of meetings failing to take place or being inconclusive. Additional problems are of course the decreasing amount of arable land available, and the fact that some of the most fertile land sometimes seems to be allocated for residential and business sites. Particularly along the major roads, new communities are 'mushrooming' without any apparent intervention from the local administration. Land Allocation Committees and chiefs appear to have lost control of land use planning in such areas.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

Village development committees have played an important role in the development of Lesotho. Other village committees and chiefs look to the VDCs for new projects. The VDC forms a viable link between central Government and local communities. But such modern institutions find their greatest strength when they are integrated with traditional institutions. The latter enjoy popular support from villagers, and if VDCs can be seen as linked with them they are likely to share this support and the traditional and modern institutions can then use each other's strengths when appropriate. However, in many communities the respective institutions appear reluctant to integrate. Members of the modern organizations tend to dominate the traditional ones because they tend to be better educated and can claim a better understanding of social affairs, both locally and in the outside world. On the contrary, members of the traditional institutions are commonly old and illiterate and may take the superior

understanding and status of modern organizations for granted.

Village development committees are predominantly made up of women. Most able bodied men must migrate to work in urban Lesotho and in South Africa. Those who remain in the villages are often too sickly, too old or just lack the interest to participate in organizations like the VDC. Furthermore, VDCs tend to be led and run by elderly people. Young people often believe that VDCs are not their concern, and those who do participate are often not taken seriously in the decision making process.

There is no official set of rules and regulations governing VDC elections, and consequently committees conduct elections in various ways. Moreover, such elections are heavily influenced by party politics. The common procedure is to invite only existing VDC members and members of the BNP to take part. This is illegal, but it has not been challenged and so continues to take place. In fact, the quality of the leadership in VDCs has often been questioned. This leadership is criticized for holding positions for which it is ill qualified. Many respondents spoke strongly about the electoral procedures of VDCs, saying that they are used for the promotion of friends and the demotion of enemies rather than for the selection of capable persons. Furthermore, it is common practice for VDC members to hold positions in several organizations. This is bound to limit the real contribution they can make in the VDC, especially if such multiple membership leads to divided loyalties.

The tenure of office of VDC members is not yet stated officially anywhere. VDC members were found not to have copies of any constitution for their committees. There are still some VDCs which have never held elections since they came into office in 1965. But it is common for elections to be held every two years, which many seem to accept as the standard practice - although it is also common for incumbent members all to be endorsed rather than for new ones to be chosen. New members are only appointed to fill gaps created by dismissals, resignations or deaths.

The survey found that some committees meet regularly on a monthly basis, while others hardly meet at all. Some meet only when there are pressing issues to be discussed.

VDCs have played a major role as centres for the distribution of food in the villages. They also help in identifying the most needy people, in addition to the work done in this sphere by the chiefs. But it is clear that self help in community development has suffered since the introduction of drought relief. The free distribution of food is contrary to the spirit of food for work projects, whose popularity is beginning to decline in many communities. Voluntary participation in development activities is similarly becoming a thing of the past. Many people now see Government as obliged to provide free food for them. In particular, drought relief seems to be taken for

granted by the younger generation.

Although it appears that modern institutions have weakened traditional ones, the strength of the latter is still evident in some cases, such as the pitso, which continue to contribute to the development activities of modern institutions by enhancing popular participation at the local level.

The survey has considered the influence of religious affiliation upon local institutions. The predominance of Roman Catholics in the membership of VDCs has been tentatively linked to the strong links between the Roman Catholic Church and the BNP, which date from the inception of the BNP. Following diplomatic ties with socialist countries, the future of this link between the Catholic Church and the BNP may be in doubt.

Party politics play a central role in the affairs of local administration and development. This is particularly true in villages where the chief and the VDC belong to opposing political camps. It often results in power struggles based on political differences rather than issues concerning development. Such political disagreements between traditional and modern institutions leave the local public in between, and well intended development projects can suffer in the process. Some opposition supporters still lament the events of 1970 and cite this as their reason for not taking part in development activities (although this also serves as an excuse for those too lazy to participate). For those who belong to the ruling party, rural projects create an opportunity to build up the image of their party and attract more support from the masses without encountering any meaningful opposition.

Although local development activities are supposed to be supported by extension workers, the inability of these workers so far to achieve their goals is clear. Moreover, the policy of decentralization is not yet properly clarified at central Government level. If handed down in such a state to district and local level staff it is extremely difficult to implement. Further training is needed for extension workers; but at least as important is the involvement of local personnel for the maintenance of projects that have been introduced. The development of this local capacity is essential. Nor should ready made lists of priorities be handed down to rural communities by central Government, although many people now seem to believe this to be their right and Government's duty.

Migrant labour is an important feature of every rural community. Rehabilitation centres should be created for returning migrants, to reorientate them to local development activities and help their respective communities benefit from their skills.

6.2. Recommendations

The principal duty of the VDC, as of traditional institutions with which it is linked, should be to foster local participation in rural development activities. With regard to the area of operation of a VDC, it is recommended that each VDC should operate within the area of a gazetted chief. If there is a need for more than one VDC in such an area, then this may be permitted by the District Coordinator.

It is recommended that the membership of VDCs should range between seven and eleven, depending upon the size of the village in question. The chief should be responsible for calling a pitso for the election of VDC members, and people should be notified well in advance that such a pitso is to be called. VDC office bearers should be the chairperson and deputy, secretary and deputy, and treasurer; their duties should be set out in detail in a VDC constitution. It should be possible to dismiss VDC members from office if they do not abide by this constitution.

VDC members should hold office for a period not exceeding four years, after which new members should be elected. But old members should be allowed to stand for re-election.

It is recommended that the standard practice should be for VDCs to meet monthly, with the agenda drawn up and distributed by the secretary a week before the meeting. VDCs should be allowed to raise funds for local projects, and to negotiate with Government for additional funding in support of such projects.

Where possible, the chief should not be a member of the VDC. But he should be called upon to arbitrate in disputes within the committee. The VDC should not involve itself in land allocation, which should be the responsibility of the Land Allocation Committee. Channels should be sought to promote cooperation in areas of mutual concern between the two bodies.

Although the VDC should have coordinating responsibility for development and social welfare in the community, people should not be discouraged from forming other committees if these promote self help. It has also been shown that committees springing out of people's own initiative tend to do better than those imposed from outside.

Central Government should seek to support and guide VDCs through district level staff responsible to the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development. Other extension staff should also be encouraged to assist the VDCs. VDCs should thus be involved in the whole planning structure of rural development. If VDCs and DDCs are involved in the whole decentralization process, this may help in drawing in local people and increasing local participation in planning for rural development.

In the course of this VDC survey, the research team noted a number of additional recommendations or observations about

specific villages as made by members of these communities. These are presented in Appendix A below.

APPENDIX A

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SPECIFIC VILLAGES VISITED BY THE SURVEY TEAM

MASERU DISTRICT

Popa_Ha_Maama

Lack of cooperation among villagers.

Members of VDC are not active. Most of them do not turn up for meetings.

The biggest problem is soil erosion

Water supply also needs to be improved.

Government does not answer when VDC raises village problems - so VDC loses credibility in the community.

A major problem for the VDC in this village is party politics.

VDC lacks funds.

Road construction is needed.

Mofoka

Need for drinking water.

VDC wants to be paid wages.

Jobs are needed for the younger generation.

VDC organization is poor because the chairperson is lazy.

Bad attendance at VDC meetings

There are no communal gardens.

Drought is the biggest problem.

Mauteng_Ha_Sanana

VDC has lost respect of the villagers.

VDC does not have a good relationship with the chief.

Drinking water is a problem.

Most of the VDC members are old.

The village has been hard hit by the drought.

Financial support is needed from the government.

Makheseng

There is a poor relationship between the chief and the VDC.

Ha_Mpiti

The VDC does not have clear terms of reference.

Government does not fulfil its promises on things like drought relief or projects.

The VDC is not paid wages.

Government does not supply the VDC with necessary equipment like wheelbarrows, spades and tractors to work on their village projects.

The VDC needs to attend regular courses on rural development.

The VDC has administrative problems which cause projects to fail.

There are problems of soil erosion and a lack of drinking water.

The village wants to build roads.

MAFETENG DISTRICT

Malealea_Letlapeng

The VDC does not have a programme of action and therefore there are no projects in the village.

na_Sebusi

The village is hard hit by drought; there is no food and people suffer from hunger.

Additional training is needed for the VDC on matters related to rural development.

Mapotu

Mapotu is divided along party political lines, and it is difficult for the VDC to bring members of the BNP and the BCP together on matters of rural development.

There are no projects in this village.

Soil erosion and donga formation are common and there is a shortage of stones to stop the growth of dongas.

Isakholo

There is a need for more projects so that villagers can earn a living.

The relationship between the community and the principal chief is poor, as is the relationship between the VDC and the community.

The VDC no longer meets.

Soil erosion and donga formation are problems.

The majority of people in this village are BCP members who still oppose Government projects.

Tebang

The VDC no longer calls meetings to discuss possible projects with the community.

There is starvation in some households in this village. The villagers believe that the VDC does not pass on their food requests to Government.

Non BNP members are not cooperative and do not contribute anything towards development in their village. They do not attend pitsos and they frustrate all the efforts of the VDC to organise the people.

Road construction is needed.

Ha Tohla

There is a great need for drinking water and the construction of a new road.

MOKHOTLONG DISTRICT

Phahameng

There is a lack of proper coordination between the VDC and the rural development office in the district. This results in projects not being done on time or not being done at all.

Villagers are reported to be too lazy to work.

There is a need for a shop, tractors, clean drinking water, and tree planting.

Additional training is needed for the VDC.

Manganeng

The biggest problem in this village was reported to be lack of communication between the VDC and the District Coordinator.

The village needs clean drinking water.

Moeling

Tools are needed for the maintenance of roads, dams and bridges.

Ha_Mokhashane

The village requires clean drinking water.

There is a poor relationship between the chief and the VDC.

Tloha-re-bue

There is a lack of cooperation among VDC members.

The Government does not send food aid in time; as a result, people have stopped working on food for work projects.

The VDC has lost control and respect among villagers.

The VDC lacks direction because of bad administration. Additional training is needed for members.

Sebelekoane

The biggest problem is that villagers have lost respect for the VDC because of its inefficiency.

Ha_Sekhaupane

Government is criticized for promising things it never delivers. The community sees the failure of Government as that of the VDC.

There is a conflict between the chiefs and the VDC on administrative matters.

More projects are needed.

Makhetheng

The VDC faces range management problems. Since the committee consists mainly of women, whose social status is low, they are unable to police controlled grazing effectively.

Ha_Machakeng

The VDC is not well organized, and as a result there are no locally based projects in the village.

Lehlakeng

There is a great need for drought relief.

Ha_Lebajoa

The relationship between the VDC and the chief is not good. As a result the projects that the VDC suggests to the community never take off because the chief opposes them.

CACHA'S NEK DISTRICT

Ha_Moshebi

There is overgrazing and poor range management.

The VDC has lost a lot of respect because it has not fulfilled its promise to bring food aid to the village.

The VDC does not call pitsos. It is very aloof from the community.

There is a need for the VDC to acquire additional training.

The VDC lacks community support. Educated people in the community do not want to cooperate with the VDC.

Isatsalemeng

Roads and drought relief are needed.

Sekokoaneng

The VDC lacks proper organization.

The VDC had not at the time of survey yet received drought relief from Government.

Napenlane

The rate of unemployment is high in this village.

There is a need for clean drinking water.

Mosiua

The relationship between the chief and the VDC is poor.

Noung_Ha_Paulus

The community wants to establish a secondary school.

Senlabathebe

The community wants to build a bridge.

It was not possible to obtain comments such as the above in all the villages surveyed since some respondents were unwilling to tell us about the problems they faced in their villages and others seemed to be ignorant about what their communities most needed.

APPENDIX B

OTHER VILLAGE COMMITTEES

In addition to Village Development Committees, there are a variety of modern organizations at local level, from farmers' associations to women's clubs and from political to development orientated organizations. A number of these are noted below; many could be made the subject of further research.

Land Allocation Committees

These committees allocate land under the chairmanship of the chief.

Communal Garden Committees

These committees deal with the organization of funds, plots, seeds and fencing material and the management of communal gardens.

Water Committees

For the management of village water supplies.

Village Health Committees

These attempt to improve nutrition standards in the community, to identify and aid sick people, and to promote sanitation.

Burial Committees

These committees receive regular payments from members, and burial expenses for members are paid out of the common fund so created.

Parent Teacher Associations

The objective of these bodies is to raise the participation of parents in the education of their children and in school affairs generally. The executive normally has between four and five

members. Teachers are supposed to learn through meetings with parents about the background of the pupils they teach.

Social welfare committees

These are supposed to undertake the distribution of drought relief to the needy in the community.

PNP village committees

These committees are an active political arm of the Basotho National Party at village level.

Self help committees

These committees may exist separately from the VDC to mobilize people to engage in local projects like dams, water systems and roads.

Church groups

A variety of religious groups are to be found in Lesotho villages.

Caritas committees

These are Roman Catholic village level committees which engage in development projects.

Vigilante committees (Lebotho la Khotso)

The main function of these committees is to promote village security by dealing with such matters as assaults, housebreaking and stock theft.

Red Cross

This organization has village level committees in some communities.

Women's committees

Various women's groups exist in the villages, commonly engaged in handicraft and nutritional instruction.

Poultry committees

Villagers may get together in order to buy and market poultry in their own community and surrounding areas.

Drought relief committees

The task of these committees is analogous to that of social welfare committees.

Handicrafts committees

These help to bring villagers together to make and market handicrafts.

Boithatele do bottle committees

These committees promote peace through prayer meetings to all villagers, irrespective of their political or religious backgrounds.

Bridge, road and dam committees

Separate committees may be established for any projects of this type.

Constituency committees

These committees look after the political welfare of the ruling party at the constituency level.

Lesang mafufa (thou shalt not envy) committees

These committees were created by villagers to promote peace and brotherhood in the community. Most of the members are women.

Ipobeng committees

These committees promote unity and self help among villagers.

Soil erosion committees

The function of these committees is to undertake soil conservation. Through chiefs and VDCs they discourage overgrazing and encourage tree planting and related conservation activities.

Thaba-Bosiu Project Committees

These committees are still mentioned by many people in the former BRDP area, although they have been absorbed by other committees.

Village Youth Leagues

These are under the auspices of the BNP. Their responsibilities are to promote and support the party at local level and to encourage youth to participate in local development.

Grazing Management Committees

These committees may be established by chiefs in collaboration with VDCs to undertake the management of grazing resources.

Farmers' Associations

These associations are intended to promote farmers' solidarity and to respond to farming problems at the local level.

Nutrition Committees

These committees, through VDCs, are involved in school feeding programmes and encourage breast feeding and proper diets.

Egg Circle Committees

These committees buy and sell eggs at the local level.

Beer Brewing Associations

Various groups brew beer together for sale, sometimes allocating the proceeds from consecutive sales to each member in turn.

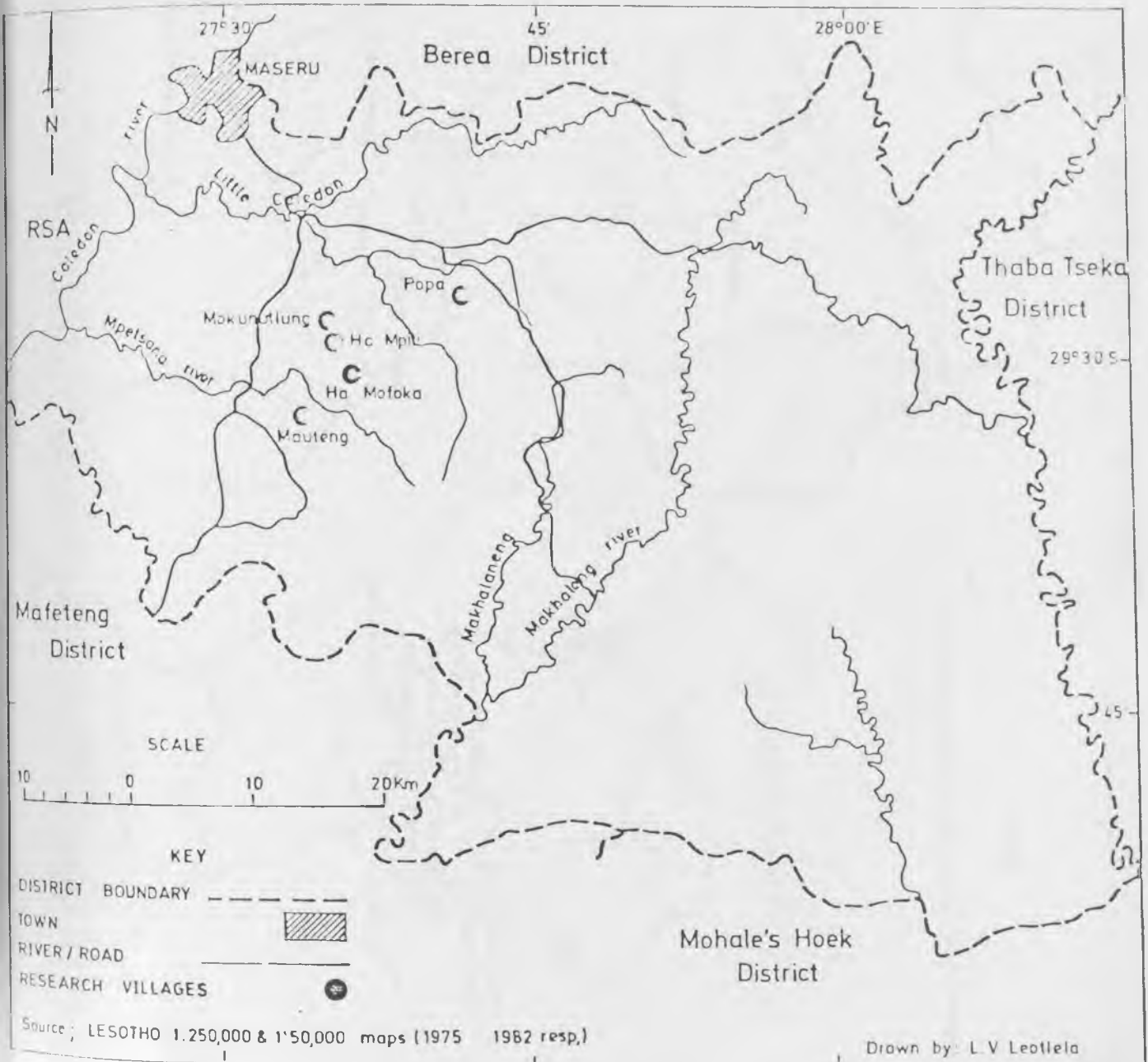
APPENDIX C

VILLAGES SURVEYED AND NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

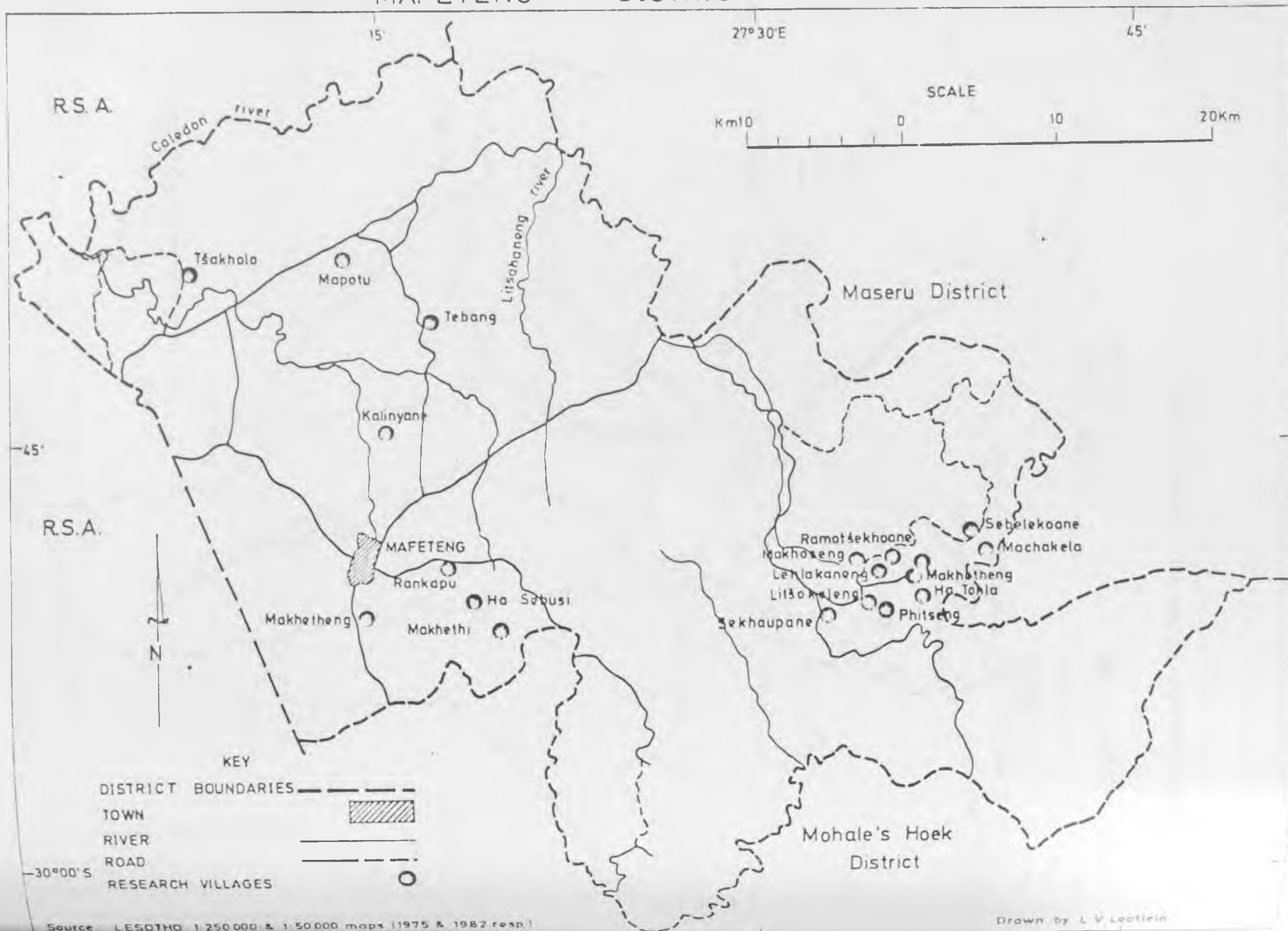
District	Village	VDC members	Non VDC members	Chiefs
Maseru	Mauteng	6	4	
	Mokunutlung		2	
	Ha Moiti	7	2	1
	Ha Mofoka	8	8	
	Popa Ha Maama	7	5	
	Tsakhofo	1		
Mafeteng	Sebelekoane	1		
	Ha Lebajoa	1		
	Ha Machakela	3		
	Makhetheng 1	1		
	Ha Sekhampane	4		
	Maknoseng	1		
	Ha Tohla	3		
	Tebang	4	5	1
	Tsakhofo	6	5	
	Mapotu	4	3	
	Ha Kalinyane	3	1	
	Ha Sepusi	2		
	Malealea	2		
	Lehlakaneng	1		
	Ramotsekhoane	1		
	Makhetheng 2	1		
	Lisokeleng	1		
	Rankapu	2		
	Phitseng	2		
	Mahali	2		
Mokhotlong	Makhetha	1		
	Phahameng	11	4	
	Mateanong	7		
	Linakaneng	4	1	
	Mothating	1		
	Lioobong	1		
	Tloha-re-bue	3	5	
	Mokhashane	2		1
	Likoae		1	
	Moeling	1		
	Manganeng	3		
Qacha's Nek	Madehlala	1		
	Mosiwoa	1		
	Moshebi	3	3	

District	Village	VDC members	Non VDC members	Chiefs
Bacha's Nek	Tsatsalemeno	2		
	Mafikalisiu	2		
	Sekokoaneng	2	2	
	Ha Paulus	1		
	Ha Mehlala	1		
	Mpharane	2		
	Semenyane 1	1		
	Ha Mavuka	2		
	Belebese	2		
	Semenyane 2	1		
	Sepelane	1	1	
	Ha Edward		1	

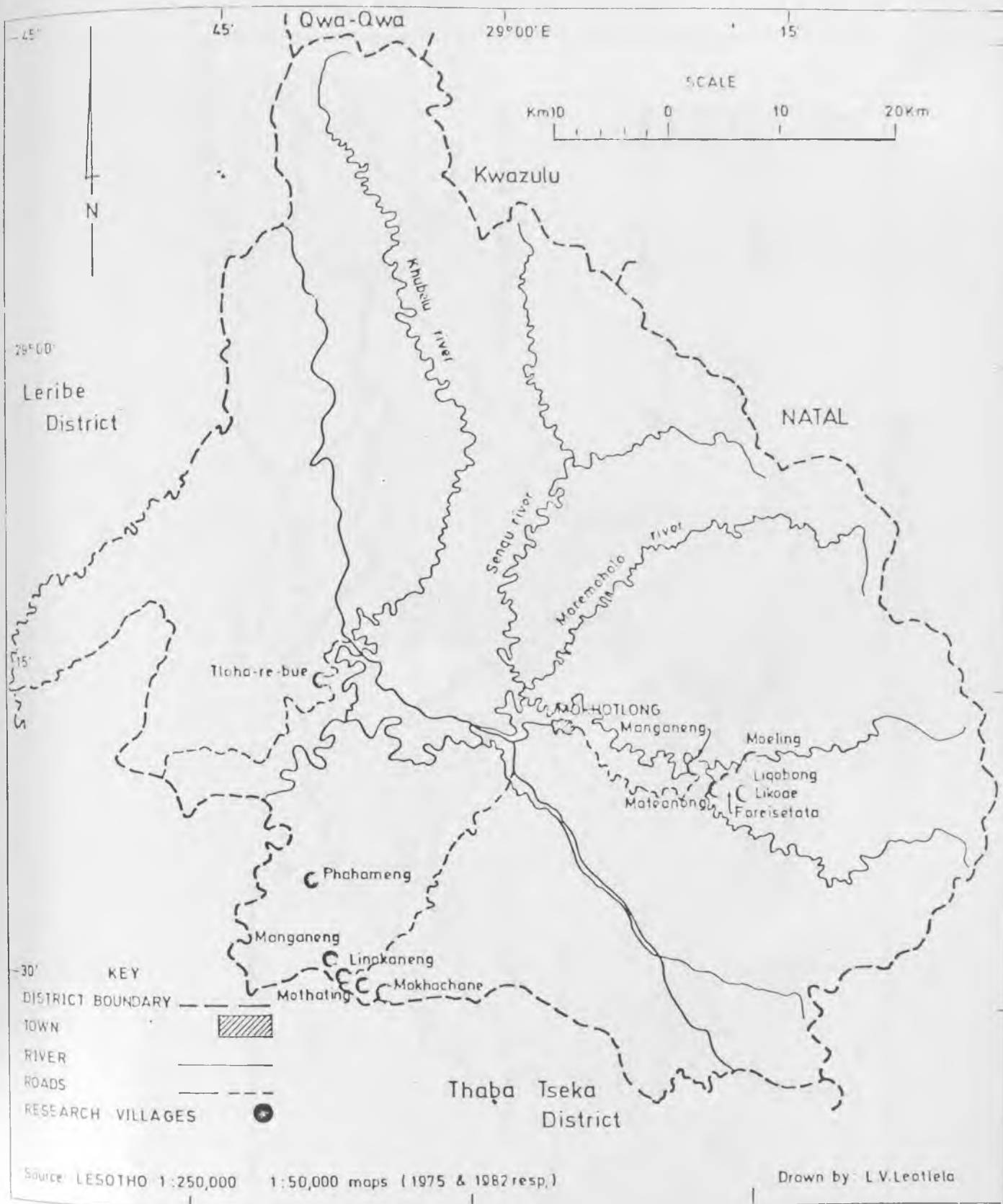
MASERU DISTRICT



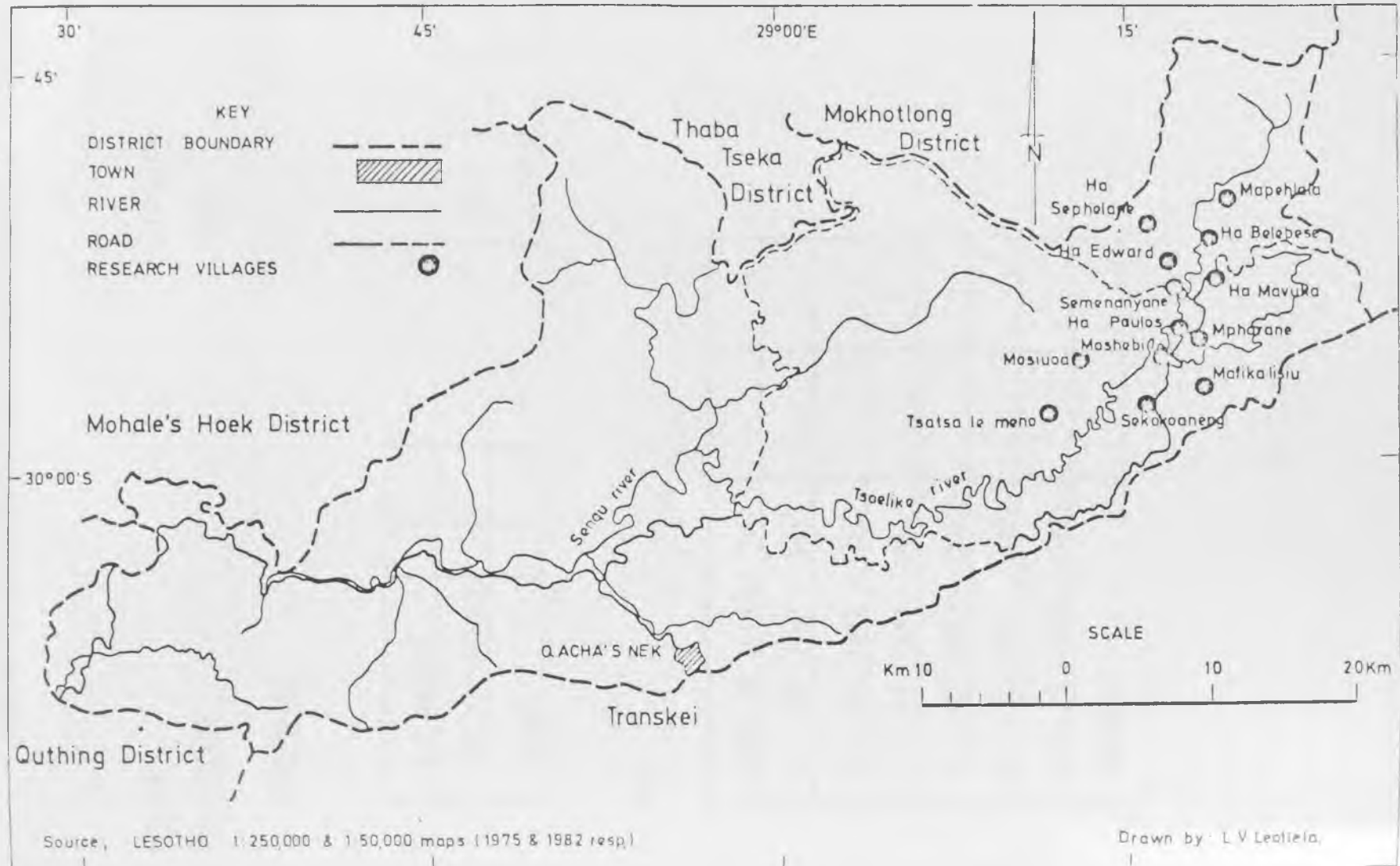
MAFETENG DISTRICT



MOKHOTLONG DISTRICT



QACHA'S NEK DISTRICT



APPENDIX D

JSAS DLPRD QUESTIONNAIRE ON VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

VILLAGE

DISTRICT

INTERVIEWER

DATE

1. RESPONDENT

2.

VDC MEMBER		
NON VDC MEMBER		
CHIEF		

MALE		
FEMALE		

4. AGE:

UNDER 20 (SINGLE 1963)		
21 - 30 (1953 - 1962)		
31 - 40 (1943 - 1952)		
41 - 50 (1933 - 1942)		
51 - 60 (1923 - 1932)		
61 - 70 (1913 - 1922)		
OVER 70 (1913 - 1922)		
UNKNOWN		

5. EDUCATION

OLD STD 1 = NEW STD 3		00
OLD STD 2 = NEW STD 4		01
OLD STD 3 = NEW STD 5		02
OLD STD 4 = NEW STD 6		03
OLD STD 5 = NEW STD 7		04
OLD STD 6 = NEW FORM A		05
OLD STD 7 = NEW FORM B		06
OLD STD A = NEW FORM C		07
OLD STD B = NEW FORM B		

HIGHER EDUCATION		10
NO EDUCATION BUT LITERATURE		11
NO EDUCATION, ILLITERATE		12

*6. OFFICES HELD ON VDC:

CHAIRPERSON		0
DEPUTY CHAIRIESON		1
SECRETARY		2
DEPUTY SECRETARY		3
TREASURERER		4
DEPUTY TREASURER		5
MEMBER		6
		7
		8
		9

* 7. TRAINING COURSES ATTENDED.

8. MEMBERSHIP, OFFICE(S) HELD IN OTHER COMMITTEES OR ORGANISATIONS

*9. RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION:

L.E.C.	0
ROMAN CATHOLIC	1
ANGLICAN	2
METHODIST	3

* 10. WHAT POLITICAL PARTY DO YOU SUPPORT?

B.N.P.	0
B.C.P.	1
M.F.P.	2
NONE	3

*11. HAVE YOU EVER SUPPORTED ANY OTHER PARTY? IF SO, WHICH?

NO		0
B.N.P.		1
B.C.P.		2
M.F.P.		3

*12. DOES YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE MEMBER(S) EMPLOYED IN SOUTH AFRICA?

YES		1
NO		2

*13. DOES YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE MEMBER(S) IN WAGE EMPLOYMENT IN LESOTHO?

YES		1
NO		2

*14. DO YOU OWN FOUR OR MORE CATTLE?

YES		
NO		

*15. HOW MANY FIELDS DO YOU HAVE

* 16. WHAT IS YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF SUBSISTENCE?

AGRICULTURE	1
WAGES LESOTHO	2
WAGES SOUTH AFRICA	3
LOCAL OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT	44

17. OFFICIALLY, HOW SHOULD VDC MEMBERS BE SELECTED?

18. HOW ARE THEY SELECTED IN THIS VILLAGE? IF THERE IS A DIFFERENCE EXPLAIN.

19. OFFICIALLY, HOW OFTEN SHOULD VDC MEMBERS BE SELECTED?

20. WHEN WERE THEY LAST SELECTED IN THIS VILLAGE.

21. WHEN WILL THEY NEXT BE SELECTED? IF THERE IS A DISCREPANCY, EXPLAIN.

22. OFFICIALLY, ON WHAT CRITERIA SHOULD VDC MEMBERS BE SELECTED?

23. ON WHAT CRITERIA ARE THEY SELECTED HERE? IF THERE IS A DIFFERENCE, EXPLAIN.

24. OFFICIALLY, SHOULD THE CHIEF BE A MEMBER OF THE VDC? EXPLAIN.

25. DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VDC AND THE CHIEF IN THIS VILLAGE.

26. ON WHAT GROUNDS CAN VDC MEMBERS OFFICIALLY BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE?

27. HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED BERE? IF SO, EXPLAIN.

28. WHAT ARE THE OFFICIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A VDC?
29. DOES THE VDC HERE FULFIL THESE FUNCTIONS? IF NOT, EXPLAIN.
30. DOES THE VDC HAVE OFFICIAL, LEGAL STATUS?
31. IS THE VDC ENTITLED TO RAISE AND AMINISTER FUNDS.
32. IF SO, HOW DOES IT DO THIS.
33. WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL DIFERENCES BETWEEN A VDC AND A LAND ALLOCATION COMMITTEE?
34. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VDC AND THE LAC IN THIS VILLAGE.
35. HAVE THE VDC AND LAC ALWAYS HAD THIS RELATIONSHIP? IF NOT, WHAT WAS THEIR RELATIONSHIP IN THE PAST?
36. SHOULD THE VDC AND LAC BE ONE BODY OR SHOULD THEY BE SEPARATE?
37. WHAT OTHER COMMITTEES ARE THERE IN THIS VILLAGE?
38. ARE THEY INDEPENDENT OF, OR LINKED TO/SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE VDC?
39. HOW OFTEN ARE VDC MEETINGS HELD?
40. HOW OFTEN SHOULD THEY BE HELD?
- *41. HOW MANY MEMBERS USUALLY ATTEND VDC MEETINGS?
- *42. IS A QUORUM REQUIRED? ,IF SO, WHAT IS IT?
- *43. WHAT IS THE ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS AT A VDC MEETING?
- * 44. ARE VDC ACCOUNTS KEPT? IF SO, BY WHOM?

- *45. DO CERTAIN MEMBERS TEND TO DOMINATE AT VDC MEETINGS?
IF SO, WHO?
- *46. DOES THE VDC HAVE ANY LINKS WITH THE WARD CHIEF OR HIS ADMINISTRATION
IF SO, EXPLAIN.
47. IS THE VDC DIVIDED ALONG PARTY POLITICAL LINES?
48. IF SO, WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF THIS?
49. IF NO, DOES THIS MEAN THAT PART OF THE COMMUNITY DOES NOT
FEEL ITSELF REPRESENTED BY THE VDC?
50. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE PARTY POLITICS SIGNIFICANT IN THE AFFAIRS OF
THE VDC OR OF THE VILLAGE GENERALLY?
- *51. WHAT CONTACTS DOES THE VDC HAVE WITH PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY?
- *52. WHAT CONTACTS DOES THE VDC HAVE WITH OTHER POLITICIANS?
- *53. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE VDC WITH THE CONSTITUENCY LIAISON
OFFICER?
- *54. DO CHURCH MATTERS OR RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATIONS AFFECT THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE VDC? IF SO, EXPLAIN.
- *55. WITH WHICH EXTENSION WORKERS DOES THE VDC HAVE CONTACT?
- *56. DESCRIBE THESE CONTACTS AND THEIR FREQUENCY.
- *57. HOW COULD EXTENSION WORKERS SUPPORT THE VDC BETTER?
- *58. WHAT CONTACTS DOES THE VDC HAVE WITH DISTRICT LEVEL OFFICIALS?
- *59. HOW MIGHT THESE CONTACTS BE MADE MORE USEFUL?
- *60. WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE DISTRICT DEVELOPEMTN COMMITTEE?

* 61. IS THE DDC HELPFUL TO THE VDC?

VDC ACTIVITIES

WHAT ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS HAS THE VDC BEEN ENGAGED IN
SINCE 1978? FOR EACH:

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES/PROJECT.

WAS IT COMPLETED OR ABANDONED OR IS IT CONTINUING?

WHAT PROBLEMS DID IT ENCOUNTER?

WHAT RESULTS HAS IT HAD TO DATE?

WOULD YOU JUDGE IT A SUCCESS OR A FAILURE?

62. PROJECT

63.

PROJECT

64.

PROJECT

65.

PROJECT

66.

PROJECT

67. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM OF THE VDC AT PRESENT?
68. WHAT PLANS DOES THE VDC HAVE FOR THE FUTURE?
69. WHAT SHOULD BE THE VDC'S PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK?
70. WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT DO TO IMPROVE THE STATUS AND PERFORMANCE OF VDCs?
- 71 DO VDC MEMBERS NEED ADDITIONAL TRAINING? IF SO, SPECIFY.

* NOT TO BE ASKED NON VDC MEMBERS.

SEPTEMBER, 1984.

NOTES

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1910:

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U. Brown, Local institutions and resource management in the communal areas of Aweneng district. Baborone, Applied Research Unit, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, 1983.



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